

LOST HIGHWAYS:
A MUSICAL JOURNEY

IAN A. MacLAVERTY

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Liberal Studies

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A MUSICAL JOURNEY**

MLA 1300000000

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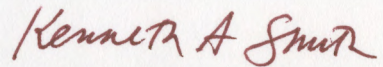
**Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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George Mason
George Mason, D.M.A.

December 2006

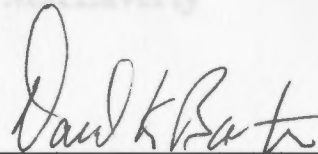
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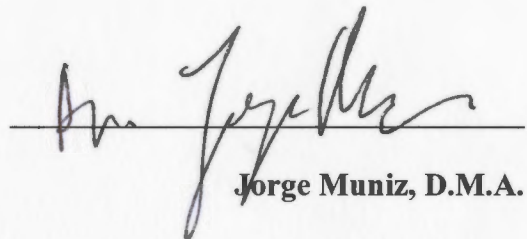


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to recognize the MLS Graduate Project Committee for their assistance throughout the duration of this project. A special thanks to the committee members: Dr. Kenneth A. Smith, Dr. David E. Barton, and Dr. Ethan F. Wickman for their time and consideration. Also, special thanks to MLS Director Dr. Mike Keen, for his help and guidance during my completion of the Masters of Liberal Studies program.

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Joe MacLennan. I was born and raised in northwest Indiana, just outside of Valparaiso. I currently reside in Mishawaka, Indiana, and attend graduate school at Indiana University South Bend. I have undergraduate degrees in Marketing and Organizational Leadership from Purdue University. Although I have no formal musical training, I do have a musical background and a great love of music. I also sing and play guitar, but my strength is writing lyrics. Most of my lyrics are written while playing acoustic rhythm guitar. I have been playing rhythm guitar for about ten years. I bought my first six string acoustic guitar in 1994. I began teaching myself chords and gradually moved on to playing different patterns and rhythms. After months of learning how to change chords, I finally learned a few easy-to-play songs. I really enjoyed playing and I eventually became more interested in writing my own songs. Since that time, I have composed the music and lyrics to over fifty songs. I have played several open mic nights, festivals, charity events, and other live gigs. Some of the venues I have played include: Front Porch Music, Barnes & Nobles, T.A. Town, The Acoustic Blues Festival, The Freight Station, The Old Style Inn, Harie's Café, The Court Room, Jaws in the Attic, Mucky Wains, The Coffer Exchange, Trailside Lodge, The Whiskey Pig, Grace's Pub, Blue Café, and Mick & Keith's Electric Ice Cream Shop. In addition to performing live I have also contributed to other musicians' studios.

My name is Ian MacLavery and I am a songwriter. I was born and raised in northwest Indiana, just outside of Valparaiso. I currently reside in Mishawaka, Indiana, and attend graduate school at Indiana University South Bend. I have undergraduate degrees in Marketing and Organizational Leadership from Purdue University. Although I have no formal musical training, I do have a musical background and a great love of music. I also sing and play guitar, but my strength is writing lyrics. Most of my lyrics are written while playing acoustic rhythm guitar. I have been playing rhythm guitar for about ten years. I bought my first six string acoustic guitar in 1994. I began teaching myself chords and gradually moved on to playing different patterns and rhythms. After months of learning how to change chords, I finally learned a few easy-to-play songs. I really enjoyed playing and I eventually became more interested in writing my own tunes. Since that time, I have composed the music and lyrics to over fifty songs. I have played several open mic nights, festivals, charity events, and other live gigs. Some of the venues I have played include: Front Porch Music, Barnes & Nobles, T.A. Toms, The Acoustock Music Festival, The Freight Station, The Old Style Inn, Suzie's Café, The Court Restaurant, Java in the Attic, Murky Waters, The Coffee Exchange, Trailside Lodge, The Bourgeois Pig, Gracie's Pub, Blue Café, and Mick & Keith's Electric Ice Cream Shop. In addition to performing live I have also contributed to other musicians' studio

recordings. I appear on Chance Lindsley's 2001 studio album, *Smile and Breath*, and on his 2006 studio release, *Heavy*.

After years of playing guitar and writing songs, I felt it was time to record a full length studio album. With the exception of self-made demo cassettes, I had never recorded any of my own material up to this point. Recording my own material in a professional studio would be a new experience for me. With several different live performances, a fair amount of written material, and some brief studio time helping other musicians, I felt that I had enough experience to create my own album of original songs. Although I understood that I possessed no academic background in music or any formal training in the performing arts, I felt my experience with music and performing would contribute to the success of a full length musical album. I was also confident that I would be able to use the creative writing, communication, and organizational skills that I had learned throughout my academic career as both an undergraduate and graduate student to write and perform the album.

MAKING THE ALBUM

The main goal of this project was to create a concept album, consisting of original lyrics and music. The idea for this project was that I would write, perform, arrange, record, and produce a full-length musical album on compact disc. I decided early in the development process that the album would be a collection of songs that were linked together by some theme or concept. The album needed to be a unified body of work consisting of several songs that were connected in some way. The individual songs had to contribute to one central feeling or overall mood of the album. My concept album would use the songs to tell a story and communicate a single message idea. While selecting the songs and writing new material for the concept album, it became clear that the central theme of the album was going to be an impulse to travel. Wanderlust, or restlessness combined with a sense of adventure, would become the concept of the album. *Last Highways* became a somewhat autobiographical work that dealt with the search for self. The collection of songs fits together as a trilogy of self-discovery. The album details a traveler's struggle to find happiness and peace of mind in a crazy and demanding world. He employs imagination, social interaction, and travel, in an attempt to find the answers to the questions that trouble him. All of the songs convey a sense of restlessness and motion. The songs take the listener on a musical journey of life, love, and last highways.

The main goal of this project was to record a studio album, consisting of original lyrics and music. The idea for this project was that I would write, perform, arrange, record, and produce a full-length musical album on compact disc. I decided early in the development process that the album would be a collection of songs that were linked together by some theme or concept. The album needed to be a unified body of work consisting of several songs that were connected in some way. The individual songs had to contribute to one central feeling or overall mood of the album. My concept album would use the songs to tell a story and communicate a single common idea. While selecting the songs and writing new material for the concept album, it became clear that the central theme of the album was going to be an impulse to travel. Wanderlust, or restlessness combined with a sense of adventure, would become the concept of the album. *Lost Highways* became a somewhat autobiographical work that deals with the search for self. The collection of songs fits together as a travelogue of self-discovery. The album details a traveler's struggle to find happiness and peace of mind in a crazy and demanding world. He employs imagination, social interaction, and travel, in an attempt to find the answers to the questions that trouble him. All of the songs convey a sense of restlessness and motion. The songs take the listener on a musical journey of life, love, and lost highways.

For me, the musical journey began in late January of this year when I was given tentative approval to begin working on this project. As a requirement of the project, I began an electronic weblog to document my progress. The weblog was used as an online journal to post updates on a regular basis and to detail the creative process of making the musical concept album. This gave the project a more personal point of reference. By posting weekly entries, I was able to amplify the content of the project through written thought. The weblog became a literary aspect of a mostly musical project. Periodically, I was able to reveal my state of mind before, during, and after the recording sessions, along with my thoughts about context, group dynamics, collaboration, difficulties, failures, accomplishments, and many of the different aspects that make up the process of recording a studio album. I began blogging on the *Lost Highways* weblog a month before my first actual recording session.

The first recording session took place on Wednesday, March 8th. I began recording with music producer and sound engineer Rick Watson at Beartracks Recording Studio in Valparaiso, Indiana. I have known Rick for years and was fortunate to have his guidance and expertise on this album. I was familiar with the work Rick had done with other local musicians and I was impressed with the high quality of music that was being produced at Beartracks Studio. Beartracks is affiliated with Valparaiso's community radio station, WVLP 98.3 FM, and is one of the top recording studios in the area. Rick owns and operates the studio and was responsible for the technical aspects of recording throughout the creative process. He assisted in the production, mixing, and arrangement of the album, while facilitating each recording session. He also appeared as a studio musician on the recorded album.

Before the recording began, Rick and I worked out the rhythm for each of the 10 songs. Once the beats per minute were established, I played the songs on rhythm guitar and Rick recorded the material as a rough demo. The process was more difficult than I had expected. We were unable to use the backing metronome or click track to hold a steady beat on a few of the songs. I could not stay in time on some songs and other songs just had an off beat rhythm. We improvised without the click track on a few songs and I was able to get through without any mistakes. I added some rough vocals and my first session was recorded history. I was a little discouraged after hearing the rough demo. My voice needed some work. I was flat throughout the recording and my voice cracked a number of times, not to mention that my guitar playing was lackluster. Fortunately, this was only my first session and none of the material was going to be used on the final album. This was a dry run for the purpose of producing a rough template for the album.

It was a start. I was so relieved that the process had been set in motion. I was finally going to record my own album. I now had the opportunity to document my ideas in musical form. All of the practicing and hard work would now turn into a tangible product. I could use the musical knowledge that I had gained over the years and the organizational skills I had learned in school to create an album based on my ideas and influences. The album became the medium for self-expression. I was able to express myself musically and creatively throughout the making of the album to create a musical story. The process of playing guitar, singing, and recording my original songs was a way to explore my creative side and to communicate my thoughts and feelings through music.

I continued practicing and playing music throughout the recording process. It was important to practice and to continue perfecting my songs in order to be successful in the recording studio. On the days when I was not recording, I did my best to take some time to work on some aspect of the album. I kept in close contact with Rick to discuss ideas and our progress on the album. If I was stuck on a certain aspect of the album, I would try to change my perspective in order to overcome that particular obstacle. Looking over my studio notes or revisiting my last weblog entry always helped to get things moving again. I did my best to stay focused in between recording sessions.

With the exception of two missed opportunities to record due to scheduling difficulties, I was able to record every week after the first recording session in March. I would prepare for my usual Wednesday session early in the week by practicing my songs on guitar. I would also listen to the demo tracks to see how I could improve my vocals and guitar playing in each song. Practicing, revisiting the rough demo disc, and listening to other forms of music, became my weekly routine. The more I practiced and listened to new music, the more I was inspired to continue with the project. I also kept my focus on the album by discussing the weekly progress on my weblog. The weblog was also helpful in letting me vent my concerns and frustrations that I faced during the making of the album.

With each recording session, I was presented with a new set of challenges. Some of the aspects of recording the album were painstaking while others were fun and exciting. No matter how prepared I was or how much I had practiced, there was always some difficulty in the studio. Some sessions were more challenging than others, just as some songs were more difficult to record than others. Most recording sessions were

productive and no session was a waste of creative energy. I approached each session with an eagerness to learn something new. I learned a great deal about music, but I also learned some new aspects of the creative process. Learning in the studio was very similar to learning in the classroom. My educational experience helped prepare me for the challenges that I encountered in the studio during the process of recording this album and completing this project.

Although each recording session in the studio was hard work and sometimes exhausting, I always came away with a sense of accomplishment and inspiration. Rick Watson never failed to inspire me with the musical talent he brought to the album. As a producer, he challenged me to do my best work in the studio. I was also amazed by the overall collaborative work with other musicians. This was one of many new aspects of music that I was able to experience during this project. Without a doubt, my favorite recording sessions involved the studio musicians. Witnessing the very skilled and professional musicians lend their talents to my album was truly an honor. It was very interesting to see how these musicians used their own style to add to the overall mood of the album. The collaborative process was the most rewarding aspect of making this album.

I also enjoyed the creative process of preparing the packaging for the album. It was good to switch gears and work on the artistic design of the album packaging rather than the recorded music. This process was also more detailed and time consuming than I had expected. Working with professional musician and artist Jerry Short was an enjoyable learning experience. Just as it was exciting to experience the recording process, it was a thrill to see my concepts and ideas come to life through the artistic

design of the album. The design turned out just as I had imagined. I wanted the photographs, lettering, and graphics to have the look of Americana. I feel that the overall packaging of the compact disc really ties together the entire concept of the album. My thoughts, ideas, memories, feelings, and views on life were captured on both the musical recordings of the album and the visual graphics within the packaging for the compact disc.

After 6 months of challenging work, I finished my concept album. *Lost Highways* was finally completed on Friday, July 28th, 2006. Since starting the project in February, I have logged over one hundred hours of studio time, listened to more than seventy different musical albums, posted fifty-seven weblog entries, had dozens of practice sessions, read a variety of music books, seen a handful of live concerts, played several different open mic nights, and visited Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco. As a result, I have recorded a full studio album of original songs and grown as a musician. Not only have I learned the ins and outs of the recording process, I have learned a great deal about myself and my passion for music. This experience has changed my views and ideas about music and the creative process. From now on, I will hear songs differently, see live bands in a different light, and feel music in a different way.

Lost Highways

Well I'm leavin' out of Indiana, I'm finally on my way
I'm rollin' down 41 all the way to FLA
And I can't wait to see that Gulf of Mexico
It always picks me up when I'm feelin' low

SONG LYRICS

But I can still get high, just by thinkin' about it in my mind
Oh when you take to the long lost highway
You never know what you might find, anytime

Well now I'm leavin' out of Indiana, I'm finally on my way
I'm headed out to California in my brand new Chevrolet
Cuz you know there's nothin' better, no better place to get your kicks
Than cruisin' with the top down, yeah cruisin' down 66

So goodbye, cuz I'm leavin'
You know I just can't stay
And if you want to talk to me I'll be
On those lost highways, lost highways, lost highways

Well now I'm headed back to Indiana, from Maine through the Green State
"Live Free or Die" - you know that's what I say
Rollin' through the mountains, I let this Chevy coast
And when I hit Ohio, I know I'm gettin' close

So goodbye, cuz I'm leavin'
You know I just can't stay
And if you want to talk to me I'll be
On those lost highways, lost highways, lost highways

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And if you want to talk to me I'll be
On those lost highways, lost highways, lost highways

Well now I'm headed back to Indiana, from Maine through the Granite State
"Live Free or Die" – you know that's what I say
Rollin' through the mountains, I let this Chevy coast
And when I hit Ohio, I know I'm gettin' close

So goodbye, cuz I'm leavin'
You know I just can't stay
And if you want to talk to me I'll be
On those lost highways, lost highways, lost highways

Maybe

The last five years have come too soon
Sittin' round in my livin' room
Just drinkin' beer and starin' at the TV

But now I'm gettin' a little sick
And tired of all the same old shit
I think it's time to ask myself maybe

Maybe I was born to play guitar
Or maybe be a big movie star
But I don't know, cuz I got these dues to pay

But I would go if I could
I'd pack my bags for Hollywood
And get myself an actin' job in L.A.

But now I don't know what I should do
Maybe I'll head on back to school
And finally get my seven-year degree

And maybe then I'll win the Nobel Prize
You know it wouldn't be a big surprise
If I got lucky and won the lottery

But if I don't win anything
I'll buy myself a diamond ring
And give it to the first pretty girl that comes along

Cuz now I know it's meant to be
And someday I will finally see
That maybe I'm right, but then again, I may be wrong

I'm thinkin' I'm right, but then again, I may be wrong
I'm hopin' I'm right, but then again, I may be wrong

Hopin' I'm right, but then again I may be
Doin' all right, but then again I may be
Feelin' all right, but then again I may be wrong

Hopin' I'm right...Doin' all right...Feelin' all right...I'll make it all right

After Awhile

I'm damned if I leave, I'm damned if I don't
I should get a job, but I won't
Instead I just pack and me and Kerouac
We pick up and hit the road

Cuz life goes by way too fast
And just like time, this too will pass
But right now I'm feeling so sad

And after awhile well it's hard to smile
When the whole world is on your back

So now I just dream of sailing away
And leaving it all behind
I'll trade in my cares, maybe changing my hair
Changing my whole state of mind

But I've got people in my life
I've got all my friends and family ties
Even still, well now I feel like I could cry

And after awhile well it feels like a trial
And I've got no alibi

And now I'm cold as a stone
Callous and jaded right to the bone
But right now, well, somehow I'm still alone

And after awhile well I feel like a child
So far away from home
So far away from home
A long, long way from home

So far away, a long, long way, I'm running away from home

One The Sea Around

Once upon a time, I had a life
I had a ship and I was a Captain
But then one day it slipped away
And I don't know how it happened

Had a little love, but not enough
To keep my heart from failing
Lost my job, can't find God
So maybe I should be sailing

On the sea I'll catch a breeze
On to the next port-o-call
Cuz memories and three degrees
They won't get you far at all

So I've been chasing ghosts down the coast
Searching for the pirates' gold
But all I find every time
Is just another empty hole

And I want to live like I want to live
But if the dead man tells no tale
He runs aground and settles down
Well I'd rather set the sail

For the sea, wild and free
Living it up and having a ball
So come with me, and you'll see
That we can have anything at all

Now tell me true, what you gonna do
When it all comes down on you
And honestly, tell me what you see
When you're watching over me

Once upon a time, I had a life
Where I could be anything at all

One More Time Around

Well I left home last weekend, searching for my soul
I headed on down to Florida town, a little out of control
But the radio was playing and the pedal was to the ground
And somewhere near Atlanta I could finally roll my windows down

Well I ran into some old friends I hadn't seen in many a year
We all laughed about the past and we had ourselves a couple of beers
Well I don't think I knew her, but I sure was glad she came
And it was one last call for alcohol before I knew her name

Leah, well it was so good to meet ya and I had no idea
I'd find you in this town
Leah, baby how can I reach ya, cuz I can't wait to see ya
One more time around

Baby I don't know the reason, maybe it's the change of seasons
That's got me reeling and rocking like a stone
And I know it might sound selfish, but baby I just can't help it
When I'm leaving is when I'm right at home

Well I'm packing up again; I'm headed back to Chicago
But pardon me before I leave, there's something that you should know
It felt so good to hold you; I thought it was all a dream
But you can bet I won't forget, the bluest eyes I've ever seen

Leah, well it was so good to meet ya and I had no idea
I'd find you in this town
Leah, baby how can I reach ya, cuz I can't wait to see ya
One more time around

Now I'm driving through Kentucky, and I'm feeling mighty lucky
That you let me spend some time with you
But now I'm back home in Indiana, so tell me baby can ya
Find some time and come and see me soon

Leah, well it was so good to meet ya and I had no idea
I'd find you in this town
Leah, baby how can I reach ya, cuz I can't wait to see ya
One more time around

Chicago Street Blues

I'm all dressed up but I got no place to go
So why'd I even bother with my best cologne
Cuz now it'll all go to waste
Just like my clean shaven face
Don't seem right to spend the night alone

And sometimes I wonder why I even care
Maybe I'll just grow out all my hair
Cuz I don't even have a job
I live in a three car garage
I park my jeep and then I go to sleep upstairs

But not before I finish off my booze
And walk around naked in the living room
I'm just another freak, living on Chicago Street
Can't you see I've got the blues

Cuz nothing ever happens in this town
Many nights I considered burning down
Just to watch the lights turn blue
And give J.D. and me something to do
Pick me up in the fire truck and ride around

And maybe then I'd make the evening news
Even though I don't look like Tom Cruise
Fame is out of reach, living on Chicago Street
Can't you see I've got the blues

I walk around, I can't sit down
Cuz all my furniture is gone
Empty walls and no phone calls
Well at least I've got this song

And tonight I am packing up to move
Cuz I've got nothing left to lose
I'm standing on my feet and I'm leaving Chicago Street
But I've still got the blues

Yeah I've still got the blues
I've got those Chicago Street blues

Waiting for the Day

Here I am, I'm alone again
Well that's not true, it's me and you my friend
What's that you say, then where have you been
Well I've been right here just hangin' in, hangin' in

I try so hard just to be myself
Sometimes I wish that I was somebody else
I can't hold off and now I can't hold on
I'm ready to go, but now I'm already gone

Now don't go, please stay, and keep on waiting for the day

Now why do you scream out loud
I must have lost you somehow
So try and you might find - you're losing your mind, No, I'm just fine
It's just the world looks better when my hair's in my eyes

So don't go, please stay, and keep on waiting for the day

Sometimes I laugh, sometimes I cry
But mostly I wonder how I'll ever get by
But I won't make it down this long, lonely road
Without you here and now, so please don't go

No don't go, please stay, and keep on waiting for the day

Now why do you scream out loud
I must have lost you somehow
Now try and you will find - you've lost your mind, No, I'm just fine
It's just the world looks better when my hair's in my eyes

So don't go, stay, and keep on waiting for the day

Don't go, please stay, and keep on waiting for the day

Cool Again

Well I'm gonna be cool again
So I hope this summer never ends
Buy myself a Chevrolet
Fill that tank and drive away

I think I'll drive to Maryland
Maybe find Uncle Sam
When he tells me to pay my tax
I'll tell him to kiss my ass

Cuz I won't spend a dime
On any of that crime
And as far as I can tell
I'm just doing fine

Well I'm gonna play the fool again
Change this world I'm livin' in
Find myself a pretty smile
Who'll maybe hang out for awhile

And I'm gonna learn to play guitar
So I can sit in smoky bars
And hear all the pretty girls say
Well I got a place that you can stay

But I don't have the time
To make any of them mine
And as far as I can tell
I'm still doing fine

Well I'm gonna be cool again
I hope this summer never ends
Gonna buy myself a Chevrolet
Drop that top and fly away

Sail away, just drive away, fade away, fade away, yeah
I'll go away, I'll runaway, I'll fly away, I'll fade away, fade away, fade away....

Where Have You Been

Baby, where have you been
And have you seen the state that I'm in
I've been waiting for something
In this life just to begin

Moved on up to Chicago
But I've been dreaming about Mexico
It's almost June and it's still cold
I need a girl that I can hold

I don't need money and I don't need a new car
I just need to know where you are
It might sound funny, but you know it's still true
I ain't found nothing if I ain't found you

Well I don't know, so I can't explain
But people say that love's a losing game
But nothing ventured, hell, nothing gained
I resign myself to make a change

Cuz I'm not greedy, no I don't need much
I just need to feel your touch
Babe I'm ready, just show me a sign
What's it take to make you mine

Now baby, where have you been
I've been thinking bout giving in
I need a lover, I need good a friend
To show me how to love again

So baby, where have you been
And can't you see this state that I'm in
I've been cheated and I've been wronged
And I've been searching for way too long

Rollin' Stone

I'm feeling like a rollin' stone
Running on the edge of time
And taxi cabs and telephones
Are the things that fill my mind

And I hear voices in my head
Telling me just walk away
But I run faster instead
Another dollar another day

Sometimes I don't understand
And other times I just don't know
Well, I'm doing the best I can
While I'm out here on my own

And it comes on like a dream
As I watch the sun go down
Across Texas and down to New Orleans
Another night in another town

People think that it's so cool
To be living like a king
But I'm feeling more like a fool
Living on these in-betweens

Sometimes I don't understand
And other times I just don't know
Well, I'm doing the best that I can
While I'm out here on my own

Amy

Let me tell you a little something
About the way it used to be
Love wasn't good, no good for nothing
At least that's the way it seemed to me

I was down, I was disgusted
The single life – a double time
My days were dull, my heart was so rusted
But you came along and made them shine

You changed my mind, with your big brown eyes, you were right on time

Amy, can't you see that I'm falling fast
Head over heels in love indeed
Now I think I'm on the brink of love at last
Would you like to spend some time with me, Oh Amy

Now we've been together through all kinds of weather
We stuck it out across the miles
Moved from Chicago out to Mishawaka
Just so I could see you smile

More than once in awhile, when I see you smile, it drives me wild

Amy, I believe that you're the one
Yes you are the one for me
Tell me that you agree, and then call it love
Tell me you're never gonna leave, Oh Amy

No matter what we do
I'll always be next to you
I'll always be there – high or low

Listen babe to what I say
I love you more every single day
I love you more than you will ever know

I'll never let you go, I'll never let you go, I wanted you to know

Waves

(By Chance Lindsley)

Packed up and moved about a hundred times
Lookin' for the light where the sun don't shine
Lost all his things one night in Paris, France
Couldn't understand why he didn't get a second chance

And he said, Babe, life is like the waves
Crashin' everyday, I wake up and somehow it's still there

Arizona's nice out in that setting sun
The Grand Canyon's like to make you come undone
It wasn't enough to make that poor boy stay
Wouldn't you believe he packed his things and ran away

Out singin' Babe, I been on my way
Searchin' all night and day, but I can't find you anywhere

He don't believe in things that he can't see
Don't like the sound that things are meant to be
He's still hopin' that he's got control
The only thing is, it seems that he don't know a thing

Waves, life is like the waves
Crashin' everyday, I wake up and somehow it's still there

Swore off school on some political spree
Got tangled with a girl then he found himself with a degree
He went to the coast so they could hear his songs
He didn't realize about a million people came along

And they're singin' Babe, I been on my way
Searchin' all night and day, but I can't find you anywhere

Waves, life is like the waves
Crashin' everyday, I wake up and somehow it's still there

Thu 2 Feb 2006

Welcome!

Welcome to the weblog devoted to the creative process of making an album, a musical concept album. This will be the first of many blog posts detailing the thoughts and small bits of mind throughout the completion of this project. I strongly urge anyone visiting this weblog to make comments. Any feedback will be greatly appreciated.

On Tuesday, January 24th, I was given creative control by my Graduate Project Committee to begin working on my Master's Thesis. As a requirement of this project, I will be keeping a journal in order to document my progress. For the purpose of this project, my journal will be the *Lost Highway* weblog. I will be posting updates on a regular basis for the duration of this process.

Wed 8 Feb 2006

Jam Session

Over the past weekend I had a very good practice session. Chance & I went to the studio and we jammed for about 4 hours at the Midway studio (two apartments). We apologized to the neighbors if we kept anyone up into the morning hours. No one complained, so I guess we must have sounded okay. Good thing the studio was unplugged and with no drums. It was a great session and the practice was needed. Thanks to Amy and Krista - you were a great audience. It was the first time Chance and I had played together in a couple of months. I played many of the songs that will make up *Lost Highway*. Chance sang along and played a little lead guitar on a few songs. He played some stuff from both of his albums - *Chance* and *Smile and Breathe*. It is always fun to do a few covers. Chance played a new song entitled "Love". I may borrow it for *Lost Highway*. He was thinking about recording it for *Harry*, but I might not be able to pass it up. It is a perfect fit for the overall concept of my album and it is quite catchy. We will have to see. Chance will be contributing to my album in many other ways. He will be singing backing vocals and he may also play the drums. Again, we'll have to wait and see. Overall, it was a very productive session. It is always inspiring to jam with other musicians. I came up with some new ideas and I'm in the process of writing a few new songs. Hopefully they will make it onto the album. I'm looking forward to getting into the studio soon.

Thu 2 Feb 2006

Welcome!

Welcome to the weblog devoted to the creative process of making *Lost Highways*, a musical concept album. This will be the first of many blog posts detailing my thoughts and overall state of mind throughout the completion of this project. I strongly urge anyone visiting this weblog to make comments. Any feedback will be greatly appreciated.

On Tuesday, January 24th, I was given tentative approval by my Graduate Project Committee to begin working on the final graduate project for my Masters Degree. As a requirement of the project, I will be keeping a journal in order to document my progress. For the purpose of this project, my journal will be the *Lost Highways* weblog. I will be posting updates on a regular basis for the duration of this process.

Wed 8 Feb 2006

Jam Session

Over the past weekend I had a very good practice session. Chance Lindsley was in town and we jammed for about 4 hours at the Mishawaka studio (my apartment). My apologies to the neighbors if we kept anyone up into the morning hours. No one complained, so I guess we must have sounded okay. Good thing the session was unplugged and with no drums. It was a great session and the practice was needed. Thanks to Amy and Krista - you were a great audience. It was the first time Chance and I had played together in a couple of months. I played many of the songs that will make up *Lost Highways*. Chance sang along and played a little lead guitar on a few songs. He played some stuff from both of his albums - *Chance* and *Smile and Breathe*. It is always fun to do a few oldies. Chance played a new song entitled *Waves*. I may borrow it for *Lost Highways*. He was thinking about recording it for *Heavy*, but I might not be able to pass it up. It is a perfect fit for the overall concept of my album and it is quite catchy. We will have to see. Chance will be contributing to my album in many other ways. He will be singing backing vocals and he may also play the drums. Again, we'll have to wait and see. Overall, it was a very productive session. It is always inspiring to jam with other musicians. I came up with some new ideas and I'm in the process of writing a few new songs. Hopefully they will make it onto the album. I'm looking forward to getting into the studio soon.

Wed 15 Feb 2006

Session Scheduled

My first recording session has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 8th. I will be recording with producer Rick Watson at Beartracks Recording Studio in Valparaiso, Indiana. The session is scheduled for noon and should wrap up around 3 or 3:30. We will start off with a production meeting and then move on to recording. The first session will be used to record a live demo CD of the songs that will make up most of *Lost Highways*. Each song will be recorded as a "click track" (using a metronome) in order to establish a rhythm for each individual song. These tracks will also be used to set the rhythm for any percussion that may be used. The demo CD will be submitted to the MLS committee as a rough draft of the album. This will familiarize the members of the committee with the type of music I write and perform.

Sun 19 Feb 2006

Current Listening

Here are a few of the albums I am currently listening to. I am trying to listen to music that inspires me to write and that is similar to my style of music. I am getting ready for my first recording session in a few weeks. In the meantime, I am practicing, writing, and listening. This is what I have been listening to lately:

<i>I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning</i> by Bright Eyes	<i>Further In</i> by Greg Brown
<i>Okemah and the Melody of Riot</i> by Son Volt	<i>Bonfire</i> by Ryan Cook
<i>Smile and Breathe</i> by Chance Lindsley	<i>Trouble</i> by Ray Lamontagne
<i>In Between Dreams</i> by Jack Johnson	<i>12 Songs</i> by Neil Diamond
<i>The Essential Tom T. Hall</i> by Tom T. Hall	<i>Pink Moon</i> by Nick Drake
<i>Jonathan Edwards</i> by Jonathan Edwards	<i>Rainy Day Music</i> by The Jayhawks
<i>Curious George Soundtrack</i> by Jack Johnson & Friends	
<i>The Legend of Johnny Cash</i> by Johnny Cash	

Mon 27 Feb 2006

Rock 'n Roll Fantasy Camp

I watched a fun program on The Learning Channel last week called Rock n' Roll Fantasy Camp. The premise of the show was pretty cool. Eighty would-be rockers spend a week in Hollywood learning how to play in a band. The campers learn the dynamics and the business of rock n' roll from legendary rock musicians. This year marked the fourth year for the camp, but this was the first year the entire experience was aired on television. The show follows a select group of campers as they live out their fantasies of playing in a real-life rock band alongside their musical heroes. The rock fans are transformed into rock stars when they get to compete in a live battle of the bands at the House of Blues in L.A. at the end of the week. The campers included a wide range of people from doctors and lawyers to bartenders and aspiring musicians. The legendary musicians included Roger Daltrey, Jon Anderson, Dickey Betts, Brett Michaels, Jane Wiedlin, and many more. The show will re-air on The Learning Channel on Sunday, March 5th at 1 PM Eastern. Check it out.

Mon 6 Mar 2006

Practice, Practice, Practice...

I'm getting ready for my first recording session this Wednesday. I have been practicing with a metronome to get a feel for what recording with a "click track" will be like. It has helped me get a better feel for the rhythm of each of my songs. Some songs have been more difficult to play with the metronome than others. Mostly, it has just been an issue of getting used to hearing a beat while I am playing. The constant beat has kept me from speeding up or slowing down in certain parts of songs.

I'm looking forward to getting into the studio for the first time and actually laying down some music. The initial demo CD will be a base of live songs that I will be able to build on and refer to for the final album. I feel pretty confident that I am prepared for the first session. I have been practicing every day. I have also been writing some new material to go on the album. Hopefully the session will be a good start to the recording process.

Wed 8 Mar 2006

Getting Started

Today is my first day at Beartracks Recording Studio in Valparaiso. I'm leaving Mishawaka in an hour to meet producer and studio owner Rick Watson. Rick is also the chief engineer at Beartracks and will help produce the album. It will be our first production meeting and recording session for *Lost Highways*. I am very excited to get started and maybe a little nervous. I practiced a little guitar this morning and I feel confident that the demo CD will turn out fine. It is about an hour from Mish to Valpo, so

I loaded the 6-disc with some good music. Here is what I will be listening to on the way to the studio:

My Aim Is True by Elvis Costello

Highway 61 Revisited by Bob Dylan

Grievous Angel by Gram Parsons

Too Soon To Tell by Jim Chaddock

Good Time Cowboy by Jonathan Edwards

No Depression by Uncle Tupelo

Mon 13 Mar 2006

First Studio Session

This past Wednesday, I spent 3 hours at Beartracks Recording Studio working on my album. It was the first time that I have ever recorded any of my material - and it showed. I have a whole new respect for "real" musicians, and I have vowed to stop making fun of the contestants on American Idol. Let's just say that the live demo CD has a long way to go before it becomes the final version of *Lost Highways*. Producer Rick Watson has his work cut out for him.

Before the actual recording began, Rick and I worked out the rhythm for each of the 10 songs to be recorded. Once the beats per minute were established, I sat and played the songs and Rick recorded the material. It sounds easy, but it was more difficult than I had expected. On some of the songs we were unable to use the click track. I could not stay in time on some songs and other songs just had a weird rhythm. Rick improvised and scrapped the click track on a few of the songs, so I was able to get through. For the most part though, the actual recording went pretty well. Besides forgetting my lyrics a couple of times and a few mess ups on the guitar, it was a productive session.

I was a little discouraged after hearing the demo. My voice needs a lot of work. I was flat throughout the recording and my voice cracked a number of times. Not to mention, my guitar playing was lackluster. Fortunately, this was only my first session and none of the material will be used on the final album. This was basically just a dry run for the purpose of producing a rough template for the album. There is a lot of room for improvement. Overall, I had a good time in the studio and I am glad the process is underway. Rick was very helpful and supportive. I am looking forward to moving on to the next step in the recording process.

Thu 23 Mar 2006

Day Off

I normally work on the album on Wednesdays, but I took the day off. It was probably a good thing that I was not recording yesterday. I have a pretty bad cold and it would have been difficult to get anything done. I have just been practicing and preparing for my next recording. I am still in the process of setting up a date and time for the next studio session. My schedule has been pretty hectic with classes and work, but I have made some

time to do some writing. I'm looking forward to my next session and I am excited to finish some of the new material I'm working on.

Sat 25 Mar 2006

Friday Session Scheduled

My next recording session at Beartracks Studio will be this coming Friday evening. The session will be geared primarily toward recording guitar tracks for the album. Rick and I will also discuss some production ideas and scheduling for the upcoming sessions. Chance Lindsley will be stopping by to offer support and to possibly record some music for the album. Chance will also be helping with the album's overall arrangement.

I am looking forward to this rare Friday night session. I will be preparing throughout the week for this Friday's meeting. I'll be practicing the guitar parts of my songs and I'll also be listening to my live demo to get an idea of the direction I want to take with the album. There are many things that I want to change and improve on. Friday should be a step in the right direction.

Tue 28 Mar 2006

Working At Studio B

When I'm not at Beartracks Recording Studio in Valpo, I'm hard at work on my album at Studio B (my apartment). I'm either playing guitar and writing new material or working on the computer. I've been listening to the live demo in order to get new ideas for the final album. Listening to each song through the computer on the headphones is a good way for me to hear all the mess ups and idiosyncrasies of the rough cuts on the demo. I take notes and try to imagine how I want the music to sound on the final recordings. Listening to my own recorded voice is a little uncomfortable, but I'm slowly getting used to it. Although the process has been somewhat stressful, I have really enjoyed working on the album so far. I'm looking forward to getting back into the real recording studio this Friday night.

Thu 30 Mar 2006

Summer Concerts

The summer concert season is slowly approaching and I'm gearing up for some awesome live music. I'm looking forward to catching a few great shows this summer. A couple of concerts are already on tap:

The first concert of the season will be James Taylor on Saturday, April 8th at The Morris Performing Arts Center in South Bend, Indiana. Taylor has always been a favorite of mine and I am excited to see his show in such a small venue. This will be my first time seeing him in concert.

Next will be Rhett Miller on Thursday, April 20th at the Park West Theater in Chicago. Miller is doing some solo shows while on a break from his band - The Old 97's.

I really enjoy his Alt-Country style music and lyrics. The Park West is one of my favorite venues and I'm looking forward to seeing the show in this intimate setting. It should be a great night in Chicago.

Fri 31 Mar 2006

Recording Tonight

I'll be recording at Beartracks Studio this evening from 5:00 to around 8:00. Tonight's sessions will consist mainly of recording the guitar tracks for *Lost Highways*. I'm not sure how many songs I will be able to finish in a 3 hour session. We may also record a few more live songs to add to the demo. I've written some new material and may want to record it before we get too far ahead on the rest of the album. Chance Lindsley will be stopping by to offer support and possibly to record a live demo version of "Waves". We are currently kicking around the idea of recording "Waves" for the album. It is a song that Chance wrote that fits perfectly with the Wanderlust concept of *Lost Highways*. If anything, it may make the album as a hidden track.

Looking forward to getting some more work done on the album. It has already been a lengthy process, but so far it has been a great experience. Hopefully, we will make some progress tonight and be able to build on the work we have already done. The session will probably include a production meeting to discuss the direction of the sessions. Rick and I have some new ideas for the album that we will discuss.

Fri 31 Mar 2006

West Coast Trip

After tonight's recording session, it's off to the West Coast. San Francisco, San Diego, and then a few nights in Vegas on the way home. Hopefully there will be some music-related parts of the trip. There are no concerts scheduled along the way, but you never know. I would like to check out Haight-Ashbury while in San Francisco. May not have time or access to make any posts over the next week or so. I'll check in next weekend with a full run down on the recording session and the trip.

Current Listening:

Faithless Street by Whiskey Town

Words and Music by John Mellencamp

The Believer by Rhett Miller

Rockin' the Boat by Jonathan Edwards

Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not by Arctic Monkeys

Skeletons from the Closet by The Grateful Dead

Tue 11 Apr 2006

Recording Session 2

Before my trip to the West Coast last week I made it to the studio for a Friday night recording session. This was only my second time working on the album at Beartracks. The session went from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. We worked solely on the guitar tracks for *Lost Highways*. Producer Rick Watson supervised the session and also let me play his custom-made guitar during recording. His guitar is perfect for recording and has a great sound.

We recorded the rhythm guitar parts for 5 of the tracks from the live demo CD. I had some trouble with the speed on the title track. At first I thought the track sounded too slow. We sped up the click track and I played it through. When I went to add rough vocals, the guitar rhythm was too fast. I ended up doing the whole song over. I was more comfortable with the beat on the second recording of the song. I had a few other problems, but for the most part the session went well.

Sat 15 Apr 2006

Haight - Ashbury

Had a chance to check out Haight-Ashbury during the trip to the West Coast. It was one of the highlights of the trip. It was cool to see a place with so much musical history. I'm sure it's nothing like it was during its heyday in the 1960's, but it is still a place unlike anywhere else. The feeling of standing on the same corner that witnessed a musical and cultural revolution in the 60's is something that I will always remember. The photos are also cool. Had to get a shot of the most photographed street sign in the universe.

Mon 17 Apr 2006

James Taylor Concert

Caught James Taylor's sold out show last Saturday night at the Morris Performing Arts Center in South Bend. The show and the venue were both fantastic. The Morris doesn't have a bad seat in the house. It was a very intimate setting and Taylor's performance was like a version of *Storytellers*, complete with a full video and slide show. Taylor, a master guitar player and singer-songwriter, also showed off his comedic talents in several stories about his life and music. His set consisted of 20 or so songs ranging from hits such as "Something in the Way She Moves", "Carolina in My Mind", and "Fire & Rain" to less well known songs "Valentine's Day" and "Slap Leather". Taylor switched between acoustic and electric guitar and was accompanied by keyboardist Larry Goldings. Before and after each song, Taylor told stories while showing old photographs and video clips on a large projection screen. Taylor proved that he is still one of the best and that he has not lost a step since signing his first record deal back in the late 60's.

Thu 20 Apr 2006

Next Studio Session

I will be back in the studio on Wednesday, April 26th. The session will begin around noon and should run until 3 or 4. The session will be a follow up to the work we did at the end of last month. I still have 5 guitar tracks to record and some new material to add. Once this session is done, I should have all the guitar tracks recorded. I'm hoping to add a few new songs to the rough live demo in the near future. I'm looking forward to getting back in the studio to finish up the guitar parts.

Tue 25 Apr 2006

Rhett Miller at Park West

We took a mini-roadtrip up to Chicago last Thursday night to check out Rhett Miller's show at the Park West in Lincoln Park. Had a great night in the city with Amy D., Amy G., and Mike. The show was awesome and Miller rocked. His set drew heavily from his new album *The Believer*, but he also played several of his past hits. Miller, who is on hiatus from his band The Old 97's, is on a solo tour with his current band The Believers.

They opened up the show with the new single, "Valentine". The band seemed to still be getting comfortable playing together and it took them 4 or 5 songs to really get warmed up. Miller was visibly wasted, but it didn't slow him down. He was very energetic and he captivated the sold out audience throughout the song packed, 2 hour set. The show really took off when the band exited the stage and left Miller to play 4 songs by himself on his acoustic guitar. This is where he shined. He frequently talked with the audience and even let a guy in the crowd propose to his girlfriend during the song, "Question" (she said yes). When the band returned they really hit their stride. They ripped through about a dozen more songs including, "King of All the World", "Nineteen", "Singular Girl", and "Our Love".

The show had many highlights - Miller's duet with Drummer Angela Webster on "Firefly", Miller wishing the audience a happy 4-20 then diving into the sing-a-long "Stoned", great introductions to "The El" and "Four Eyed Girl", a moving tribute ("The Believer") to late singer-songwriter Elliot Smith, and Miller singing a whole verse of "Question" in French. Miller clearly enjoyed performing for the Chicago crowd, and the crowd fully enjoyed the concert in the intimate setting at the Park West.

Wed 26 Apr 2006

Recording & Listening

I'm headed to Beartracks Studio to lay down the rest of the guitar tracks for *Lost Highways*. After today I should have all of the guitar parts recorded. I still have some new material to add and some more work to do on the guitar before we move on to the

vocals. Today should be a productive session at the studio. I'm looking forward to moving to the next level in the recording process.

As always, I'll be listening to some good music on the way to the studio. Here are the current CD's I'll have on the car stereo:

The Believer by Rhett Miller

Pet Sounds by The Beach Boys

Tones of Home by Blind Melon

Out of Exile by Audioslave

Mon 1 May 2006

Wednesday's Session

The recording session last Wednesday went pretty well. We finished up all of the guitar tracks except one. I had some difficulties with "The Sea" and will have to finish it next time. I had a hard time with the rhythm of this song. It has a very off-beat progression. The song changes every time I play it. I will have to practice before the next session so I don't have any problems when I try it again. Besides for this one song, the rest of the session was fine.

Once again, I played Rick's custom guitar. With a set of brand new strings the guitar sounded great. Since we did not have a click track to work with on the remaining 5 songs, I just played over the rough demo tracks. It was different from the last session, but I was comfortable playing this way. I feel the results were the same as if I had played with a click track. It was definitely easier to keep my place. At the beginning of the next session we will finish up the remaining guitar parts and then move on to some new stuff.

Wed 3 May 2006

Ideas

I am currently in the process of coming up with ideas for the backing music needed to accompany the songs on *Lost Highways*. Most of the backing music will be played by studio musicians. Producer Rick Watson will be adding some different instrumental parts to the songs and will also help with the musical arrangement. He has asked me to send him some ideas of what I would like the music to sound like. I am listening to each song separately and trying to decide what instruments should be added. I will let Rick know what I think and then he will give me his input. He will then be able to add some instruments and arrange the backing music without me being in the studio more than I need to be. This gives Rick more creative control in areas that I am unfamiliar with. As a professional musician and sound engineer, I trust his expertise in this aspect of the creative process. This will also save time and help me to meet my deadline.

Fri 5 May 2006

Next 2 Sessions Scheduled

I am scheduled to record at Beartracks Studio on Wednesday, May 10th and Wednesday, May 17th. I'm excited to get going with a couple of sessions in a row. This Wednesday's session will be a wrap-up of the guitar parts. We will also work with some new material. We need to lay down a few new tracks to go with the original demo. I'm still waiting to get Chance into the studio to record the music to "Waves" for his album and mine. In the meantime, I'm still working on the backing music for the album and need to send Rick the ideas as soon as possible. I'm hoping to have it done sometime this weekend before I record on Wednesday. In the following session we will begin work on the lead vocals. Things are coming together and it looks like the project is on schedule.

Tue 9 May 2006

Pat McGee Band

Caught Pat McGee Band in the Rocks Lounge at Blue Chip Casino on Sunday night. The concert was free to the 30 or so people lucky enough to have found out about the show. McGee was scheduled to play the Grand Ball Room, but due to slow ticket sales the venue was moved to the modest casino lounge. This is a band that sells out the House of Blues every time they come to Chicago! McGee treated the small audience to a mostly request-filled set. He interacted with the audience throughout the hour and a half show. Along with a few covers, the band played several of their fan's favorite songs. The show was fantastic and it was cool to see such a great live band in such a surprisingly tiny venue. We were able to talk with Pat for a few minutes after the show. He was very friendly and even signed a few autographs. I'll definitely try to catch a few of their shows in the future, but it's unlikely I'll ever see them again in such an intimate setting.

Wed 10 May 2006

Today's Session

I am off to Beartracks for another Wednesday recording session. Rick and I will probably have a production meeting to discuss some ideas for the music. We should finally be able to finish up the guitar parts today. I have two songs left that still need to be finished. After that, it's on to additional music and vocals. I'm looking forward to wrapping up the main rhythm guitar parts today.

Current Listening:

Songs We Sing by Matt Costa

Chariot by Gavin DeGraw

Pearl Jam by Pearl Jam

Blood on the Tracks by Bob Dylan

Thu 11 May 2006

Studio Session 4

Rick and I spent around 4 hours yesterday working on the music for *Lost Highways*. I thought we finally finished "The Sea", but it looks like the song still needs some work. This has been the most difficult song to get right. After finishing up the guitar tracks, Rick played and recorded the bass tracks for a few of the songs. It was really cool to hear bass on my songs and it felt good to be moving on to a different level in the recording process. He is going to put down more bass before we meet next Wednesday. Overall, the session was productive, but it was also very frustrating. I am starting to understand the difficulties in recording a full length album. I'm getting a little anxious and I just want everything to sound good. I'm also a little stressed out about getting the album done on time. All things considered though, I'm still having fun and I'm pleased with my experience in the studio.

Mon 15 May 2006

Summer Concert Update

On Tuesday, May 23rd a group of us are going to see the Black Crowes at the Morris Performing Arts Center in South Bend. We have mezzanine seats in the same section as our seats for the James Taylor concert. The Black Crowes are one of my favorite bands of all time and I am really excited to see them in such a small venue. I've seen them live a few times, but it was always in a much larger venue. The show is being billed as "Fifteen Years of Cosmic Rock-n-Roll", so they should be playing most of their hits. It should be a great night with friends & family and a rockin' show.

Mon 22 May 2006

Drum Session

Last week's recording session was all DRUMS! Drummer and music teacher Bill Romer was in the studio to lay down the drums and congas on several songs. The session went very well and Bill was fantastic. He is a true professional and a rockin' drummer. Bill was completely focused as he ripped through 7 songs in a total of 3 hours of studio time. He nailed each of the songs on the first take and even had time to add congas to an additional 2 songs. I was incredibly pleased with how the drums sounded on all of the songs. Rick had previously added bass to each of the songs and it all came together when Bill added the drums. Rick also did a great job working the sound board and keeping the session moving.

The entire session went smoothly and it was very productive. This was my fifth session at Beartracks and I would say it was the most fun, so far. It was so cool to hear my songs begin to come to life during the session. It was easy for me to just sit back and let the professionals do their work. The dynamics in the studio with Bill and Rick were amazing. I had a blast! It was a fun and focused atmosphere, so we were able to get

some work done and still have a good time doing it. Overall, it was a successful session and I'm excited to hear the finished mix.

Tue 23 May 2006

Tonight: The Black Crowes

Getting geared up for tonight's show!

Current Listening: **THE BLACK CROWES**

Shake Your Money Maker

The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion

Amorica

By Your Side

Tue 30 May 2006

Black Crowes Concert

A group of us caught the Black Crowes show at the Morris Performing Arts Center last Tuesday night. There was no opening band, so the Crowes played for nearly 3 hours. Unbelievably, they only managed to play about 15 songs. The concert had a Grateful Dead feel, with some songs lasting well over 10 minutes. Nearly every song turned into an impromptu jam session. The set included a number of guitar solos, along with a harmonica solo, keyboard solo, drum solo, and even a maraca solo. What, no bass solo? I guess that would have been just too much to absorb. What the set did not include was a single song off their multi-platinum debut, *Shake Your Money Maker*. They also failed to play any songs from their excellent 1999 studio release, *By Your Side*, and only one song from *The Southern Harmony Musical Companion* - arguably their best album to date. They closed their set with "Remedy", the only real hit played the entire night.

The band had their own agenda and did not seem very concerned with the small crowd's requests to play the hits. It looked like the band members were enjoying themselves, but the crowd seemed unsure what to make of the set list selections. Although the band was tight and the music sounded great, it would have been cool to hear a few of the songs that made the band famous. I feel that a band as big as the Black Crowes has an obligation to their fans to at least play some of their radio hits. Don't get me wrong, I really enjoyed the music and the Black Crowes will remain one of my favorite bands - just not live.

Wed 31 May 2006

No Session Today

I will not be in the studio today. I am working and Rick is out of town. Hopefully, we will resume our recording schedule next Wednesday. I am going to have to pick up the pace in order to meet my deadline. Things should really start to come together over the next few weeks. We still have a good amount of recording to finish up. I am looking forward to adding some more music to the tracks and moving on to the lead vocals.

Thu 1 Jun 2006

Jam Session at Studio B

After the Black Crowes concert last week, we went back to Studio B for a little jam session. My brother Morgan and I jammed into the wee hours of the morning. Amy and Jocelyn were great listeners and the acoustics were pretty good in the 3rd floor apartment venue. Luckily we had no complaints from any of the freak neighbors or the power-tripping maintenance supervisor: "Hey - turn that music down, I'm a manager here." Yeah, manager of smoking cigarettes and turning the water off twice a month for no apparent reason.

Anyway - the sold out crowd (2) was treated to nearly 3 hours of original acoustic music and several cover song favorites. The musicians were treated to several glasses of Absolut and cranberry. Morgan played a few originals including, "Strung Out and Tied Down" and "Furls of Grey", along with several cover songs ranging from David Gray to Radiohead. I played some songs from *Lost Highways* including, "The Sea" and "Where Have You Been", and managed to pull off a few cover songs from Ray Lamontagne and The Barenaked Ladies. It was good to practice a few songs from the album and it's always fun to play some covers.

Overall, it was a great night with family and friends. Dinner, Black Crowes live, drinks, and a late night jam session - not too bad for a Tuesday night! It was a really good time. Hopefully, everyone enjoyed the night as much as I did. Thanks to Aim and Joc for being such a good audience. Already looking forward to our next get-together.

Sat 3 Jun 2006

"Waves" Session

Chance Lindsley was at Beartracks studio last week to record the song "Waves" for his album *Heavy*. The song will also appear on *Lost Highways*. The song on his album will be a stripped-down acoustic version. The version for my album will have a different arrangement with additional music. The song itself has a familiar message that will blend well with the other songs on *Lost Highways*. It will be a welcomed addition to the overall concept of the album. Chance and I are both excited about recording the two different versions of the song for our own individual albums. It's a really fun song and I'm sure we'll have a great time in the studio working on the different arrangements. Chance had

no problem laying down the rhythm guitar and vocals for the 3 1/2 minute song. He and Rick wrapped it up in just a couple takes. I'm looking forward to hearing what we have so far and adding my personal touch to the song for my album. I'm sure it is going to sound great! Thanks to Chance for letting me use the song for this project.

Mon 5 Jun 2006

The Ragbirds

Chance and I caught The Ragbirds at Shoreline Brewery in Michigan City last Friday night. This was the first Ragbirds show we have seen and the first time they have played at Shoreline. The show was really cool and the band sounded great. They have a unique sound and their songs convey a positive message. They have a groovy acoustic-folk style with an emphasis on rhythm. Their style worked well in the small venue. The music definitely lives up to its "Infectious Global Groove" motto. It was a fun live experience. A few of the band members even stopped by our table to say hello and talk for awhile during the break. Chance and I were both impressed with the band's stage presence and we really liked all the drum work. We thoroughly enjoyed their performance and will definitely check out some of their shows in the future. They're from Ann Arbor, so most of their tour stops are in Michigan. Sounds like a good excuse for a summer road trip. Until then, I'll be listening to their recently released album *Catching Fire (a live experience)*, recorded live at TC's Speakeasy in Ypsilanti, Michigan, earlier this year. The recording captures the essence of a live jam band and does justice to the eclectic style of The Ragbirds. After listening to their CD a couple of times, I'm already looking forward to seeing them live again.

Tue 6 Jun 2006

Back to Beartracks

I'll be back in the studio tomorrow morning working on *Lost Highways*. I have not recorded in a couple of weeks. I'm eager to get back to work on the project. Tomorrow's session will be used to work out some production issues and to add some new music to the already recorded tracks. Rick will be busy laying down different instrumental parts to several of the songs on the album. I'm a little behind schedule, but we should be able to pick up the pace in the next few weeks. Hopefully, the music will start to come together and I will be able to move on to the lead vocals. There is still quite a bit of work to get done, so I need to get going. I'm still having fun with the entire process and I'm always looking forward to the next step of recording this album. Current Listening:

Catching Fire by The Ragbirds

Electric Rodeo by Shooter Jennings

Broken Boy Soldiers by The Raconteurs

80's Hits Stripped by Various Artists

Move By Yourself by Donavon Frankenreiter

Rearviewmirror by Pearl Jam

Mon 12 Jun 2006

Rhythm Session

I was back in the studio last Wednesday after a two week layoff. It felt good to get moving again and to hear some of the music that had already been recorded. It was a pretty laid back session, with Rick doing most of the work. He added some extra guitar parts to the rhythm bed on several of the tracks. He also added some piano to a few of the songs. Everything sounded really good. It is amazing how additional instruments make a song come alive. Rick did a great job on rhythm guitar and keyboard. I was especially pleased with the full guitar sound on "Rollin' Stone" and the piano on "Waiting for the Day". It was fun to sit back and watch Rick play along with my songs. Most of the music is now done. We will probably add a little more percussion and some organ, but for the most part the musical rhythm for each song is finished.

We still need to address some issues with "The Sea" and more than likely I'll want to add some additional music to the stripped down version of "Waves". For now, it's on to the lead vocals. This week's session will focus mainly on recording the final vocals for all 12 songs. With each session, we get a little closer to a final mix. There is still a great deal of work to do in order to complete the album on time, but we're up to the challenge. Right now, we're just concentrating on getting the vocals completed and then we will be able to move on to something different. We still need to fill in some spaces with additional music and backing vocals, along with touching up a few songs. Hopefully, we will be able to finish the main parts of the album this month and start mixing in July.

Mon 12 Jun 2006

Open Mic at Keith & Mick's Electric Ice Cream Shop

After the recording session at Beartracks, I played the open mic at Keith & Mick's Electric Ice Cream Shop. Chance hosts the open mic every Wednesday night at the cool rock-n-roll themed ice cream parlor in Chesterton. It is a fun place to play and the atmosphere is perfect for acoustic music. They had a great turn out for the open mic and business was steady the entire night. At one point, there were around 20 people listening to the performers while they stood in line for ice cream. Business really picks up at the shop in the summer and the open mic always brings out a great crowd. There were 10 or so performers who played and sang with acoustic guitars, electric guitars, an accordion, and also read poetry. It was a good time as usual and the ice cream rocked! The music wasn't too shabby either. Check out the pics.

Wed 14 Jun 2006

In Studio

I'm back in the studio today to work on the lead vocals. I'm not sure if I'll be able to finish the vocals for all 12 songs, but I'll give it a shot. I've really been looking forward to working on the lead vocals. The demo CD was very rough and I'm excited to finally lay down some new lead vocals. Most of this week has been devoted to practicing my songs and making sure I'm prepared for the session. Hopefully, I will be able to stay in tune and in rhythm. Obviously, the lead vocals are very important to the overall sound of the album. It should be a fun session.

Current Listening:

Heavy (5-song Demo) by Chance Lindsley

Lost Highways (Rough Live Demo) by Ian MacLavery

Fri 16 Jun 2006

Lead Vocals

On Wednesday, we recorded the lead vocals to 7 of the 12 songs for *Lost Highways*. I was in the studio for around 4 hours, but it seemed like a full day of work. I was completely drained by the end of the session. I had no idea that singing could be so exhausting. It was a great session though. I was tired out, but I felt really good about the entire experience. I had to sing each song all the way through about 3 or 4 times in order to get a clean take. After each song was recorded, we went back and re-recorded certain parts that needed to be fixed. It was really cool to see how the recording process took a new turn during the vocals. It was definitely different from recording the music. The vocals seemed to need more focus and detailed work in the studio.

Rick was very patient, as always. We ran through the 7 songs with no major problems. Rick had to take out some of the backing music on a few songs, so I could sing along with just my guitar. The bass and piano on a few songs were throwing off my concentration. I also had some minor difficulty with pitch on some of the tracks, mainly with "Waiting for the Day". The song sounds really pretty with Rick's piano part, but I had a hard time singing some of the notes. It was the last song of the session and I was starting to get worn out. I was out of breath and my voice wasn't as strong as it had been earlier in the session. Overall, I thought the session was a success and I'm excited to get back into the studio next week to finish up the vocals.

Rick spent a good part of his week adding more music to the songs on *Lost Highways*. It's like having a built-in studio musician the whole time the album is being recorded. He added electric rhythm guitar and electric lead guitar. He also recorded some organ parts on a few of the songs that needed more backing music. The electric guitar really adds to the overall sound of the song, especially on "Maybe" and "One More Time Around". The album is going to have a good mix of acoustic and electric guitars. I

Tue 20 Jun 2006

More Vocals

I'll be back in the studio tomorrow morning to finish up the lead vocals. I still have to sing vocals on 5 more songs. We saved the faster and louder songs for last, so the session should be somewhat challenging. I'm actually pretty excited to work on the more upbeat songs. It will definitely be a fun session. I'm hoping to get through the remaining songs with no major difficulty and then move on to some other parts of the recording process. We still have to decide on how to record "The Sea" and there are a few other details that still need to be worked out.

I feel really good about the album so far. I know there is still some more work to do, but it is starting to look like there is an end in sight. I'm still having fun and learning a great deal about the entire recording process. The next few sessions are going to be very important to the overall sound of the album. I'm looking forward to finishing all of my parts as soon as possible, so Rick is able to start mixing in the near future. Until then, I'm going to enjoy the remainder of the project.

Mon 26 Jun 2006

Current Listening

Current Listening:

Peaceful Amnesty by The Cwarpuppies

Live on the Rocks by Blues Traveler

A Blessing and a Curse by The Drive-By Truckers

Smile by The Jayhawks

Trace by Son Volt

Classic Hits by Jim Croce

Tue 27 Jun 2006

Rick's Sessions

Rick spent a good part of last week adding more music to the songs on *Lost Highways*. It's like having a built-in studio musician the whole time the album is being recorded. He added electric rhythm guitar and electric lead guitar. He also recorded some organ parts on a few of the songs that needed more backing music. The electric guitar really adds to the overall sound of the song, especially on "Maybe" and "One More Time Around". The album is going to have a good mix of acoustic and electric guitars. I

like the stripped down versions of a couple songs, but I also wanted the album to be more upbeat in certain places. Sometimes less is more and other times - more sounds cool. We'll have to see how everything sounds when the album is ready to be mixed. I'll have to make some decisions on how I want each individual song to sound in regards to the overall sound of the album. For the most part, everything sounds good and the album is coming together.

Tue 27 Jun 2006

Lead Vocals II

I was in the studio last week to work on the 2nd round of lead vocals. We recorded the vocals to 4 more songs during the lengthy studio session. This session was more difficult than the previous recording session. I had a tough time with a few different parts. I seemed to get out of breath early in the session and I felt drained toward the end. The songs that were left to sing were faster and more upbeat than the songs we recorded a week earlier. It was fun to sing "Where Have You Been" and "One More Time Around" but these two songs really wore me out. I'm pretty sure they both turned out okay, though. I needed a few takes to nail some of the hard parts. It was easier to sing "Amy" and I had no problems singing over Chance's vocals on "Waves". With a little editing and some additional music, I'm confident that the songs will sound great.

Fri 30 Jun 2006

Vocals, Drums, and Percussion Session

I started off Wednesday's session with vocals on "After Awhile". I was a little apprehensive of the new version that Rick had recorded with a click track. It didn't seem like I was going to be able to sing along with the music, and the faster beat of the song was throwing me off. Once we started recording the song though, things went fine. The song is a little faster than how I normally play it, but the consensus was that the more upbeat version of the song sounded much better. To Rick's credit, the new version has a better feel and will fit perfect on the album.

The second half of the session was spent on drums and percussion. Bill Romer was back in the studio to add some rhythm to a few more songs on the album. He played the hand drums, guiro, afuche/cabasa, and get this - cardboard boxes! At the beginning of the session, "Waves" had nothing more than rhythm guitar and vocals. When Bill was finished adding all the drums and percussion, the song had a brand new feel. The session turned crazy when Bill stacked up some supply boxes and used brushes to get just the right sound we were looking for. I never knew cardboard boxes could sound so good. Bill was awesome and the session was a total blast. The drum sessions were some of my favorite times in the studio. We should now be finished with this part of the recording process.

Fri 30 Jun 2006

Another Open Mic at Mick & Keith's

After the recording session, we hit the open mic at Mick & Keith's Electric Ice Cream Shop in Chesterton. Chance hosted the open mic that featured about a half dozen local musicians. This was the second time this summer that I have played at Mick & Keith's. The usual performers were there to play their original music and a few cover songs. Chance and I both played several songs from our upcoming albums. There was a pretty good turn out and the audience seemed to be having fun. The ice cream shop is a great place to play and it is always fun to play for the local crowd. I'm sure we'll play at Mick and Keith's several more times this summer.

Thu 6 Jul 2006

Rare Day Off

I had a rare day off from the studio yesterday. Rick is out of town this week - playing his annual gig in Ocean City, Maryland, so there was no scheduled recording session. Instead, I spent the day working on other aspects of the project. I worked on the graphics and the packaging of the album for a couple of hours. I sent e-mails and made phone calls. I also turned in my application for graduation. If everything goes as planned, I will graduate next month. I have a ton of work to do over the next three weeks in order to meet the August 1st deadline for the project. I'm looking forward to getting back in the studio next week to finish up some vocals and work out some final details.

Fri 7 Jul 2006

Current Listening

Current Listening:

Solo Acoustic: Volume 1 by Jackson Browne

9th Ward Pickin' Parlor by Shawn Mullins

Put the "O" Back in Country by Shooter Jennings

This Time Around by Jamie McLean

Demos '03 by Crosby Loggins

All the Roadrunning by Mark Knopfler & Emmylou Harris

Thu 13 Jul 2006

Yesterday's Session

We started off yesterday's recording session with a production meeting. Rick and I discussed the album and went over what still needed to be accomplished before he started the final mixing. Everything is coming together on time. We just need to do a little extra work in the next few weeks in order to finish by August 1st. I have 2 more full sessions in the studio and Rick will work on the album when he is available during the week.

After the production meeting we recorded backing vocals. Rick sang on a couple of songs and then Chance came in and sang on a few other songs. Everything sounded good and the session went smoothly. After we finished with the backing vocals we listened to some of the songs that Rick had already started mixing. Just a few more weeks and everything will be finished. I'm really looking forward to completing the album!

Fri 14 Jul 2006

Album Packaging

After the recording session on Wednesday, I met with Jerry Short to discuss ideas for the album packaging. We went over the process of designing the package and also discussed pricing. It looks like I should be able to stay within my budget on this part of the project. Jerry has a graphic design studio right next door to the recording studio. It's a convenient set-up for musicians recording at Beartracks. I am looking forward to working with Jerry on the packaging aspects of the album. We are scheduled to meet again next week after my recording session.

Fri 21 Jul 2006

Current Listening

Current Listening:

American V: A Hundred Highways by Johnny Cash

One Take Radio Sessions by Mark Knopfler

Graceland by Paul Simon

Girlfriend by Matthew Sweet

Spacey and Shakin' by Pete Dinklage

15 by Buckcherry

Sat 22 Jul 2006

Challenging Session

The sessions have become more and more challenging over the past few weeks. This week's session was no exception. We began the session with a production meeting that went very well. Rick and I discussed and listened to a few of the tracks that he had previously mixed. We also listened to the updated music on "The Sea" and decided it was time to finally finish it up. Rick then reworked the bridge so that I was able to sing the song comfortably. I still had some problems with the breaks, but we ended up getting through with no major problems. Then the computer crashed! We lost everything that had been done in the studio up to that point. We were around the half-way point of the session when the computer went down. It was extremely frustrating, but Rick was able to keep the session moving on a positive note. We started over from scratch and I was able to finally finish my lead vocals. Rick reassured me that the song was going to be great and maybe the computer had crashed for a reason. He will be working this week on building music around my vocals. This is a different approach than we have used on all of the other songs. I'm confident that Rick will do a great job with the song and the album will be ready to master next week. Our next session is Wednesday and it should be our last meeting. I'm excited to finally finish the album and turn in my Graduate Project.

Sat 22 Jul 2006

Meeting with Jerry Short

After the recording session, I met with Jerry Short of *Short Run Records* to begin work on the design layout and replication of the album. Our second meeting went well and we had some fun working on the album cover and overall design. Jerry did a fantastic job of bringing my ideas to life. He also had some great ideas of his own that helped to make the entire layout more interesting and eye catching. We were able to complete a good amount of work in a small amount of time. The meeting was productive and I would say we are more than half done with the album packaging. It is really cool to see my concept of the album start to come together. I'm looking forward to meeting with Jerry again next week. If everything goes as planned, I will have a final completed version of the CD by the end of the week. I am very excited to hear and see the final product.

Mon 24 Jul 2006

New Songs Added

I have posted the lyrics to 3 new songs that will appear on *Lost Highways*. Two of the songs are originals and one of the songs was written by Chance Lindsley. I wrote "Waiting for the Day" before we started recording and "Amy" was written during the recording process. Chance recently wrote "Waves" and it fit perfectly with the theme of

Lost Highways. I perform the two original songs on the album and Chance and I perform "Waves" together. The 3 songs are all completely different, but they fit together well on the overall album. Check out the words to these songs on the *Song Lyrics* page.

Tue 25 Jul 2006

Summer Concert Update

Morgan, Jocelyn, Amy, and I are going to see Ryan Adams & The Cardinals at The Vogue in Indianapolis on Thursday, August 3rd. I've never been to The Vogue, but I've heard it is a cool venue. The show is sold out and it should be a great time in the small club atmosphere. We've been looking forward to the show for awhile. We're all big Ryan Adams fans and it will be our first time seeing him live. The set list will probably draw heavily from the 3 albums Adams and his new band released over the past year. Hopefully, some Whiskeytown stuff and a few of his solo hits will get played. Either way, I'm sure the show is going to rock. Singer-songwriter Neal Casal is the opener. I'm looking forward to some good music and a fun night out with family and friends.

Wed 26 Jul 2006

Current Listening

On my way to the studio for our **LAST SESSION!** It's going to be a busy day, but I'm ready to get it done. I'm excited to see everything finally come together. Here's what I'm listening to on the drive, to and from the studio - Current Listening:

Hit by a Train by Old 97's

Diamonds on the Inside by Ben Harper

On and On by Jack Johnson

Bombs Over Bristol by Don McCloske

Plans by Death Cab For Cutie

One Guitar, No Vocals by Leo Kotke

Thu 27 Jul 2006

Final Session!

Wednesday's recording session at Beartracks Studio was the final *Lost Highways* session. The entire session was spent listening and mixing the 12 songs on the album. I feel really good about the completed album and I'm relieved to finally have it done. Rick still had to make some last minute changes before he began mastering the album. Everything sounded good and I'm looking forward to listening to the full CD from start to finish.

After the session, I once again met with Jerry Short of Short Run Records to continue working on the album layout. We worked for over three hours on the entire CD package. We made several corrections and changed a few different aspects of the album design. We were finally able to put the songs in their correct order after Rick and I had

sequenced the songs during the mixing session. The layout looks great and Jerry did a fantastic job with the additions and changes made to the CD. Again, I'm really excited to see the final completed product. I should have the CD in hand sometime this weekend.

Mon 31 Jul 2006

It's Done!!!

E-mail from producer Rick Watson on Thu, Jul 27, 2006 11:42 PM

Hey Ian,

After much tweaking, twiddling, diddling, and a little fiddling, *Lost Highways* is a reality. I must say that on the whole I'm very proud of it, as you should be as well. Some of it has been a hard fought struggle but I think every song came together fine in the end. The project sounds good, the production holds up and your writing and singing hold up too. I'll be very anxious to see how your professor(s) feel about it. It's always a scary proposition to have your music reviewed or 'graded' because it is such a subjective art form, with so many different styles and tastes. However, I have done a whole lot of recording over the last 25 years and this project deserves high marks and I'll be very surprised if it doesn't do well for you (assuming the rest of your master's package is in order). Good luck!

Thanks for recording with me and good luck with your Master's degree.

Rick

Tue 1 Aug 2006

Current Listening

Current Listening:

Lost Highways by Ian MacLavery

Tue 15 Aug 2006

Finishing Up

Now that I have had a few weeks to listen to the CD, I'm ready to move forward with the project. I am very happy with how everything turned out. I think the album sounds great and I feel good about the end results. It was really a fantastic experience and I had a lot of fun in the studio with Rick and the other musicians. Looking back on our time in the studio now that the album is completed, it seemed like it flew by. It is weird to not be in the studio on Wednesdays and not spending all of my free time working on the album. It's a big relief to have the album complete, but I will miss having that creative outlet.

I'm sure I'll be playing guitar and writing songs as usual, but it won't be the same as recording in the studio.

For now, I'm in the process of working on the written essay that will accompany the audio portion of the project. Once the essay is completed in the correct format, I will submit the entire project to my Graduate Committee. I'm looking forward to finally being done with the entire project and being able to graduate. Hopefully, everything will go well with the rest of the project and then I'll be able to go back to just writing songs and having fun. It will be a good change of pace and a lot less stress.

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